



## RESOURCE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 9, 2008

### MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 9, 2008, 8:00 AM at the City of Tucson Community Services Center, 310 N. Commerce Park Loop, Tucson, Arizona.

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#### RPAC Members in Attendance

- Carolyn Campbell, Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, Co-Chair
- Matt Clark, Defenders of Wildlife
- Greg Shinn, Southern Arizona Home Builders Association, Co-Chair
- Amanda Best, Metropolitan Pima Alliance
- Joy Lyndes, At-Large Member
- Paul Green, Tucson Audubon Society
- Diana Hadley, Santa Cruz River Alliance
- Karolyn Kendrick, Arizona Native Plant Society

#### Ex-officio Members in Attendance

- Locana de Souza, Arizona Game and Fish Department
- David Jacobs, Arizona State Land Department
- Orlanthia Henderson, Town of Sahuarita
- Karen Berchtold, Town of Oro Valley

#### Staff in Attendance

- Leslie Liberti, Office of Conservation and Sustainable Development (OCSD)
- Ann Audrey, OCSD
- Nicole Urban-Lopez, OCSD
- Jamie Brown, OCSD
- Holly Lachowicz, Ward 3
- Diana Rhoades, Ward 1
- Ries Lindley, Tucson Water
- Adam Smith, Urban Planning and Design

#### Public in Attendance

- Susy Morales, RECON

### AGENDA ITEMS

#### 1. Call to Order / Roll Call

A quorum was established and the meeting commenced at 8:17 a.m.

#### 2. Approval of Minutes for September 11, 2008

Karolyn Kendrick moved to approve the September 11, 2008 minutes. Motion was seconded by Joy Lyndes. It was noted that Carla Danforth might provide edits to the section of the minutes covering her presentation. Motion was approved by a voice vote of 7-0.

**3. Update on Resource Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) membership**

- Carolyn Campbell reported that all RPAC members and Ex-Officio members have been approved by Mayor and Council. The Clerk's Office does not have loyalty oaths from Charles Barclay and Sherry Barrett.
- An updated copy of the RPAC membership roster was passed around to all members present for corrections if needed.

**4. General Updates**

- Southlands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Comment Request
  - o Jamie Brown reported that RPAC comments on the Southlands HCP were originally due by the end of September but some questions came in close to the deadline so it was extended to Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>. RPAC members can submit their comments electronically (preferred) or in a letter. The preliminary draft of the Southlands HCP will be revised next year based on the comments submitted.
- City's current and proposed rainwater harvesting requirements, and greywater stubout requirements
  - o Ann Audrey reported that the Mayor and Council passed the residential greywater stubout requirement by a unanimous vote. The ordinance requires new residential homes to be pre-plumbed with greywater stubouts but does not require a greywater system to be installed. Homeowners who want to install a greywater system won't have to dig-up their plumbing to install the system, potentially saving them thousands of dollars.
  - o Ann Audrey reported on the subject of the proposed commercial water harvesting ordinance. She said staff recommended a 50% offset of landscape water demand using harvested rainwater at commercial sites, and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee endorsed this recommendation. A 50% offset was recommended by staff instead of the original 75% offset recommended by the stakeholder committee. At the 75% offset level, only 25% of total plant water demand could be met with potable water. Since plant water demand in April, May and June totals around 36% of annual water demand and there is minimal rainfall in those months, the 25% available potable supply would not be sufficient to meet this demand unless tanks were installed at the commercial sites. It was a stated intent of the Stakeholder committee to allow maximum flexibility for commercial facilities to accomplish rainwater harvesting. At the 50% level, facilities can choose to harvest water in earthworks, in tanks, or using both. The City code already requires all new commercial sites, common areas of subdivisions, public buildings, and public rights of way, to harvest rainwater to support landscape, though there is no specific volume requirement as there is for the proposed new commercial water harvesting ordinance.
- Staff distributed copies of Carla Danforth's presentation from the September 11, 2008 RPAC meeting.

**5. Initial Discussion of Vision, Goals, and Objectives for Riparian Habitat Area Protection**

- Ann Audrey facilitated the discussion.
- The following questions were asked to initiate the discussion:
  - o What are the key physical attributes of watercourses?
  - o What are their key functional attributes?
  - o What attributes of riparian regulations do you want to see?
  - o What are the issues with current watercourses within City limits?
  - o What trade-offs can we make?
- Two maps were posted showing City limits, the Southlands HCP planning area, the Lee Moore Wash study area, and floodplain envelopes in the Southlands. These maps provided a regional framework of the hydrologic environment and planning context.

- Staff recorded the discussion on flip charts and grouped discussion points under topic areas. The discussion summary is below.

### **Coordination with regional planning efforts**

- Coordinate with—and provide input to—regional planning efforts affecting watercourses, including those listed below
- City Southlands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)
  - The Southlands HCP covers land in the County. If the City annexes, this land will be covered by the HCP
  - The HCP Technical Advisory Committees is figuring out how to incorporate climate change into the HCP
  - Some of the species covered in the HCP are related to riparian habitat.
  - Need to identify key washes for protection
- Lee Moore Wash Basin Management Study, being conducted by Pima County and their consultants
  - Much of the Lee Moore Basin is in 100-year floodplain. County studying how development can proceed without creating public health issues and damaging the function of the watershed.
  - Need to find out how riparian habitat areas will be addressed in the “Rules of Development” the County will prepare; need to identify key washes for protection
  - Channelization is being considered. Channelizing can control the edge, doesn’t necessarily require cementing the entire wash. In the Lee Moore Basin area watercourse flow is so spread out there is little vegetation. If the flow were narrowed it could support riparian vegetation.
  - Recommendations that come out of the study are supposed to be adopted by the County, City of Tucson and the Town of Sahuarita.
  - RPAC wants staff to request presentation by County on this study, with an opportunity for RPAC to provide input
- Conservation Land System (CLS)
  - Would apply in eastern and southern part of city HCP study area if City annexes these areas
- COT riparian ordinances for WASH, ERZ and Floodplain
- Climate change planning
  - Mayor and Council created the Climate Change Committee to develop a climate change mitigation and adaptation plan.
  - The committee will try to consider changes in watercourse flow, possible expansion of the 100-year floodplain, and other changes that might result from climate change.
  - The goal is to complete recommendations and send to Mayor and Council by the end of next year.
- Transportation planning
  - Pima Association of Governments (PAG) has prepared the Southeast Arterial Study showing possible road alignments in the Southlands
  - PAG currently undertaking transportation planning effort through 2040
- Other watershed scale studies by Pima Co in the future
  - Oro Valley area
  - Brawley

### **Comparison of ordinance and development standard**

- There will be new Development Standard (DS) that accompanies the riparian habitat ordinance RPAC develops.
- Ordinances provide a framework, give general specifications and require Mayor & Council approval
- Development standards provide the details for implementation; they are administrative and are easier to adapt over time if needed

### **Ranking watercourses**

Can rank washes in order to know which to preserve. Ranking criteria might include:

- Habitat value: high value to low
- Condition: high quality to low
- Identify wash role
- Identify the level of protection needed
- Look at what is being protected now and whether that level is appropriate
- Address role in flood control issues
- Is the watercourses an urban asset?
- Potential for urban or rural wash restoration
- Ability to support key bird species
- Wildlife corridor, habitat potential and linkages
- Road placement, road guidelines
- Development in and near the site
- Determination as to whether it's a natural wash, developed wash, or transition from natural to developed reaches

### **Current treatment of urban washes**

- Currently wash maintenance is the responsibility of either City, County or private land owners, depending on who owns land or has easements
- City is revising watercourse maintenance practice guidelines
- Some urban washes are heavily impacted
  - Historically maintenance was focused on clearing
  - Some washes need to be cleared to allow sufficient conveyance of stormwater
- ORV use is prohibited within 1/4 mile of buildings so typically urban washes would be protected, though there is no dedicated enforcement
- Safety, fire, mosquitoes, and appearance can precipitate requests that City maintain a specific wash
  - Public safety and flood control take precedence over habitat preservation Need to determine and resolve the intersection between safety and riparian habitat protection.
- Issue about preservation by developers vs. impacts by city maintenance crews. How should developer impacts be adjusted in light of safety issues.

### **Potential issues under the riparian ordinance umbrella**

- Environmental values
- Growth areas
- Climate change
- Water harvesting/watercourse enhancement (look into constructed basins, like beads in a chain, on the east side of town)
- Detention basin spacing, design, habitat potential
- NPPO synergy
- Water quality of stormwater
- In-lieu options for developers
- Create incentives for developers to help restore washes instead of having disincentives because funds are spent on compliance instead
- Methodologies for treating urban runoff and improving stormwater quality
- Undeveloped areas: what do we want this to look like? Developed City: how do we fix current problems and restore? Transition areas: how are the former integrated?

### **Range of ordinance visions**

- Preservation:

- Preserve all washes in perpetuity
  - Use vision of 100% preservation to drive goals and objectives
  - Conduct active management to preserve habitat
- Issues for developers:
  - Provide incentives for developers to conduct restoration
  - PRA is currently determined site specifically by owner/consultants. Would be better for government to predetermine riparian habitat including PRA so potential buyers know what they are getting into
  - Decrease the regulatory burden on developer by streamlining and reducing work and timeline needed to assess degraded urban washes
  - Make sure regulations are simple to implement and don't create impediments
  - Create one-stop shop for developers dealing with watercourses
  - Current mitigation requirements are up to 3:1 replacement of impacted vegetation. Should stop requiring these unsustainable levels of revegetation that are too dense to be supported by the habitat.
- Regional context
  - Determine how washes can be restored within a larger regional context.
  - Incorporate regional context into ranking criteria for washes.
- Roads:
  - Address road locations and construction, road crossings, etc. as they affect riparian areas
  - Help guide road design and placement, taking into account both impacts and possible usefulness to habitat (roads sometimes result in water pooling upstream, creating more habitat)
- Maintain and restore natural systems:
  - Balance natural systems and urban pressure, integrate where possible between safety and ecosystems
  - Address bringing back lost values
  - Enhance wildlife habitat in the urban environment and maintain urban wildlife corridors
  - Maintain, enhance, and restore ecosystem structure and function
  - Maintain understory
  - Have trained management/maintenance teams to implement the vision. Incorporate maintenance crew training in planning.
  - Have crews report about wash condition and wildlife sightings to determine wash values.
  - Identify and maintain floodplains that serve hydrologic functions, ecological functions and/or other values
  - Utilize appropriate techniques to integrate structure, function and development – make infrastructure appropriate to ecosystem
  - Maintain root masses of grasses for carbon sequestration and bank reinforcement.
  - Develop options for control that enhance habitat
  - Look at the role of water harvesting in supplying more water to riparian areas
  - Reintroduce beavers
- Make Ordinance goals consistent with climate change policy and HCP
  - Make a coordinated effort to develop consistent visions and goals between Riparian Habitat Ordinance, the Southlands HCP and Climate Change Committee.
  - COT is working with UA, Tucson Audubon Society, and US Fish and Wildlife Service to address climate change in the HCP
  - Need to address the uncertainty of climate change—can this be done in the ordinance?
  - HCP will have monitoring and management, can this help in understanding watercourse impacts due to climate change?
  - Build in a restoration feedback loop. How can this help frame ordinance and adaptive management?

- Look at the option of requiring perpetual irrigation in mitigation areas to address possible reduction in rainfall due to climate change. This is currently being required by staff on some sites
- Find out if/how County addresses climate change
- Have consistent riparian protection requirements between jurisdictions

#### **Characteristics of degradation**

- Dominated by nonnative vegetation
- Engineered structure
- Erosion

#### **Ways to develop washes that reduce impacts**

- Subsurface stabilization
- Stabilization located more remotely from channel banks
- Concentrate sheet flow to promote more vegetation growth
- Make development synergistic with riparian habitat: water harvesting, multipurpose detention basins, using outflow from basins, prevent clean water scour

#### **6. Future Agenda Items**

- Presentation about Lee Moore Wash Basin Management Study (Bill Zimmerman)

#### **7. Call to the audience**

#### **8. Adjournment at 10:00 a.m.**